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Official Records

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New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.00 p.m.

Address by Mr. Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland.

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Poland, His Excellency Mr. Aleksander Kwasniewski, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kwasniewski: I am pleased to speak before the Assembly of this universal Organization, where virtually every country in the world, small or vast, rich or poor, has a voice, thus making democracy work in international relations.

At the outset, I should like warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to your honourable office. I note with pleasure that your diplomatic career includes a term as Ambassador of Malaysia to my country. The delegation of Poland will do its best to assist you in your important functions. Let me also pay tribute to Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, an eminent statesman from Portugal, for the excellent manner in which he presided over the work of the Assembly during its fiftieth anniversary session. May I also express the assurance of my highest appreciation to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

As a representative of Poland, a country that has suffered so much war, foreign occupation and partition in its history of more than 1,000 years, I feel entitled to convey a simple message: peace is priceless, be it international, with other countries, or internal, among social partners. To endure, peace needs solid economic foundations, sustainable development and growth. Yet peace remains a supreme value and a precondition of life, rightly recognized from the outset as a principal objective of the United Nations.

My country's very recent experience shows that it is possible to undertake a profound transformation of a whole political and economic structure, to defuse a potential internal conflict through peaceful negotiation. Having regained full national sovereignty, we were able to reshape our foreign policy in accordance with the national interest, to reorient it towards the Euro-Atlantic structures and to establish and strengthen good-neighbourly relations with the newly created and/or profoundly transformed States that now surround us. Is there another country in the world which, in just a few years, has seen all of its neighbours, without exception, change and not as a result of conflict? Sometimes we hear opinions on an alleged lack of stability in our region, Central Europe. But it is not true. The case of Poland, with its stabilizing influence in the region, tells quite a different story.

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I am proud to report to you, Mr. President, that we have accomplished a lot in the last seven years. Not only have we built a sound foundation for a new economic and political system, but we have also succeeded in stopping our economic decline and have achieved, now for the fourth year in a row, a high rate of economic growth, which has encouraged the media to add the Polish eagle to countries nicknamed "economic tigers". This has been achieved through an enormous effort on the part of our people, who have proved mature enough to pay the price of economic transformation. We have opened up the economy and the country. Tens of millions of tourists are pouring in every year, and millions of Poles travel abroad in all directions. We have become an attractive place for foreign investment, which exceeds $10 billion, and we are working on further improving the conditions in which investment can thrive.

It is not my intention to minimize the challenges we still face. Yet I strongly believe in our future. The time has come for Poland, which received help and encouragement from so many countries during its "Solidarity" revolution and its historic peaceful transformation based on a political and social contract, to offer its help to other countries that undertake great processes of transformation. We can share our experience, the services of our companies, and the work of our experts in various fields where transformation is a must. As an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member, Poland is determined to become much more involved than heretofore in assisting the developing countries and those in transition.

Our priority in terms of foreign policy is to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union. While seeking these memberships, we treasure friendly relations and multifaceted cooperation with our neighbours, Russia among them. At the same time, Poland is fully conscious of its duty to carry its part of the obligations as a member of the world community, as manifested by our active participation in the work of the United Nations and currently as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. For many years, Poland has traditionally been among the 10 States fielding the largest contingents in United Nations peace-keeping operations.

Permit me to make a personal remark. I made the appeal "Let Us Choose the Future" into the slogan for my 1995 election campaign. May I suggest making this appeal — choosing, and looking into, the future while learning from our common past — here in the United Nations? Old enmities and hatred, both among and within States, should no longer cast a shadow on the construction of our common future.

Let me give as an example Poland's proposal to delete from the United Nations Charter the so-called enemy States clause. Indeed, Poland now has close, friendly relations with its long-time adversary, Germany. As a tribute to history, we plan to carry out soon joint manoeuvres of German and Polish military units, and to contemplate establishing a joint Blue Helmets brigade consisting of Polish and German soldiers. Would that not constitute the best *signum temporis* possible?

This Organization is in acute need of reform to adapt to the challenges of the next century. There is a pressing need for the United Nations to confront the future. Its duty remains to make its Member States aware of global problems as they arise, to analyse them, and to help resolve them through multilateral cooperation. To make this happen, much more is needed than the mere restructuring of its intergovernmental bodies and the Secretariat. Bolstering efficiency in carrying out United Nations tasks through rational downsizing where possible and necessary is not the only major requirement. More importantly, it is high time to adapt the United Nations work programme through innovation and redeployment.

For instance, in Poland's view the United Nations should enhance and upgrade its potential in the field of the protection of human rights through the establishment of a General Assembly committee on human rights and humanitarian affairs, while merging the existing Second and Third Committees into an economic and social one, and through the elaboration by the Secretary-General of an agenda on human rights. In addition, in a more long-term perspective, the creation of a new main body such as a human rights council might be contemplated.

The United Nations is expected to help parties in conflict to reach agreement and achieve a just peace. But peace-keeping forces are useless if there is no will for peace in the hearts of fighters. It is necessary to encourage the easing of ethnic, religious and other tensions before they erupt, or if they already have, after resolving the conflict. That is why it is vital to expand preventive action, including diplomatic efforts and post-conflict peace-building as well as assistance for reconstruction and development. We are ready to offer our diplomats, international lawyers, and social and economic development experts for preventive United Nations missions and post-conflict assistance efforts.

At the same time it seems essential to address the question of United Nations rapid reaction, including rapid-deployment potential, both in the headquarters and in the field. We have notified the Secretary-General of our intent to make available for the rapid reaction component of the stand-by arrangements our special GROM (Thunder) force, which proved itself in the Haiti operation. Poland considers it timely to re-focus the Organization's attention on preventive diplomacy and rapid-reaction capability. To prevent as much as possible and react as quickly as possible — this is what is increasingly needed in contemporary conflicts.

Indeed, do we always have to helplessly witness worldwide bloodshed and misery, so readily served up by the media, and only afterwards try to help, when it is too late and more costly, when more money brings less benefit and whereas an earlier joint action could have saved a lot of blood and tears for so many countries and peoples? Why do we not ponder how to substitute a strategy of prevention and advance action for one of late reaction *ex post facto*? This strategy could go beyond a conservative doctrine of the maintenance of peace and security, covering a rapid and selective reaction to potential threats arising among and within Member States, as well as the consolidation of peace when it is painfully achieved.

I turn now to the crucial issues of the post-cold-war era: disarmament, arms reduction and averting the spread of arms through non-proliferation. Poland, which now holds the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, welcomed with great satisfaction the submission to the Assembly of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and the adoption of the resolution, of which we were among the sponsors. We now look forward to the broad endorsement of the Treaty, which I had the privilege of signing this morning. We must not allow the arduous efforts of so many States to be wasted. While keeping in mind the need for eventual nuclear disarmament, partial steps towards that goal should be given full approval as they bring it closer and make the world safer, as would the entry into force of another important legal instrument: the chemical weapons Convention. Chemical weapons are sometimes called the nuclear bombs of the poor.

Recent conflicts, however, have shown that mass destruction can also result from conventional arms, the stockpiles of which have grown enormously. That is why we welcome the parallel focus on such arms, including so-called micro-disarmament, and an early total ban on the use of anti-personnel landmines.

If the United Nations wants to remain meaningful in the key areas of its mandate, to be ahead of events, foreseeing and not merely reacting, slowly and inadequately, to what life brings with the astounding pace typical of our times, it should grasp and cope with the interactive relationship between peace, development and human rights protection.

All these changes can have the desired effect only in conditions of sustained financing of programmed activities. Political will is not enough. The current financial crisis is propitious neither for the execution of such activities nor for reform. To enable the Organization to fulfil its statutory tasks and to reform, its financial credibility needs to be restored. Member States should not discount innovative ideas for supplementary financing, which could enable more activities to take place, especially in support of developing countries, those in transition, and conflict-ridden countries. Since Governments are more often than not reluctant to increase their dues or their voluntary contributions, or to allow any form of international taxation on their companies and citizens, additional funds could be sought from the private sector.

For instance, the idea of a United Nations trust fund financed by tax-free donations, mainly from transnational corporations, could be examined. After all, stability combined with economic growth and social peace also benefit such companies. Should their host Governments create encouraging conditions for them to contribute, such as common rules for tax reduction, the United Nations might acquire additional sources of funding, especially for humanitarian and development support activities. Such a solution would in no way affect the governmental character of the Organization if control over the allocation of the newly acquired additional resources rested with Governments, and if no conditionality could be introduced by donors.

I would now like to draw the attention of the Assembly to what I consider one of the most important aspects of my statement. I witnessed the terrorist attack at the Olympic Games in Atlanta in July, and cannot forget faces expressing shock and tragedy.

Poland is a country that has struggled over centuries for its own freedom and that of others. We have finally achieved well-earned greatness and the benefits of democracy. However, our nation is also paying a heavy toll for those benefits: open frontiers and increased migration of people pose threats to the security and well-

being of my compatriots. Organized crime distorts the image of democratic societies on a national, regional and global plane. To combat it, we need the solidarity of all States, and a concerted effort by all of us.

The international community is faced with the growing threat arising from seemingly unstoppable manifestations of transnational organized crime and international terrorism, which menace both the material and institutional foundations of our societies. What is especially dangerous for us and for future generations is that in so many cases we have been unable to bring criminals to justice. Justice has been neither done nor seen to be done.

I have received reports that my own country, and the whole region, faces a steep increase in drug trafficking, slavery, trade in child sex, and money laundering. Organized crime is a worldwide phenomenon. It brings tragedy and suffering to many — the immediate victims and other innocent people. But it does more: organized crime leads to the creation of illegal associations and businesses that infiltrate and undermine legitimate economic interests and political structures. Organized crime is like a form of corrosion in societies. Organized crime corrupts States. Organized crime is a cancer in our communities, a cancer that we should fight together. Alone, we risk losing the battle and endangering our security.

I am convinced that only a worldwide effort under United Nations auspices has any prospect of stopping these crimes, which threaten democratic freedoms and democracy itself. Poland believes, therefore, that the time has come to make a concerted international effort to agree on, and accede to a comprehensive legal instrument: a convention designed to enhance cooperation between States and facilitate the work of law enforcement agencies in fighting transnational organized crime. I have the privilege to submit to this Assembly a draft framework convention against organized crime. It is annexed to the text of my statement, which has been distributed to members.

The Assembly will note that the draft convention deals with illicit traffic in drugs and psychotropic substances and money laundering; traffic in persons; counterfeiting currency; illicit traffic in or stealing of cultural objects; stealing and smuggling nuclear material, and the misuse or threat of misuse of such material to harm the public; terrorist acts; illicit traffic in or stealing of arms and explosive materials or devices; illicit traffic in or stealing of motor vehicles; and corruption of public officials.

The draft text proposes a system of cooperation between Member States to combat organized crime. It calls for States either to punish offenders or to extradite them. We ask States to introduce criminal liability for people who derive profits from organized crime, wherever such liability is not already clear. We believe that we should make United Nations agencies and regional and global governmental and non-governmental organizations play a greater role in combatting organized crime.

The draft framework convention is by no means carved in stone. We call on Member States to discuss and improve the text. We hope that the Assembly will determine modalities to assure its speedy and successful elaboration. I am sure that our common effort will help to save our societies from the scourge of organized crime.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Approaching the end of the century, the planet is visibly in turmoil despite the otherwise universally welcomed end of East-West confrontation and of the ever-present threat of global conflict. Yet even in the heart of Europe, we are painfully aware of conflicts, wars, tragedies, massive disasters, famine and serious economic difficulties. People often expect the United Nations to offer a miraculous remedy for all the evils of the world and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women, and of nations large and small.

If we just adhere to the Charter, the high roads will be clear, not only for our time but for the coming century. We must not betray the high expectations held of the United Nations. For its part, Poland will not fail to continue to support the Organization. In today's interdependent world, we need a global body to settle our differences and to ensure orderly global governance to avert threats to humanity. There is no point in reinventing the wheel. We are able to adapt what we already have to what we need now and in the years to come. In essence, we are looking forward to a more united United Nations which has chosen the future. As an original Member State, Poland stands prepared to contribute its share to making such an endeavour a reality.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Poland for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, His Excellency Mr. Niels Helveg Petersen.

Mr. Petersen (Denmark): Encouraging trends can be seen in many parts of the world following the end of the East-West confrontation. Democracy has taken firm root in many countries. The improved economic performance of many countries is making an important contribution to the welfare of peoples.

At the same time, we still face difficult challenges. Ethnic and internal conflicts are taking a far heavier toll than earlier international conflicts; grave cases of violations of human rights occur; the poorest countries are lagging behind in economic development; the gap between rich and poor is growing; and the environment is coming under increasing strain. The international community is facing challenges going far beyond traditional diplomacy, challenges directly affecting the lives of each individual human being. We must create safer and better living conditions for the individual.

This year, I will highlight four priority areas: first, peacekeeping and international security; secondly, human rights; thirdly, economic and social development; and, fourthly, the environment. In these areas, common efforts in the United Nations are imperative.

First, international peace: threats against international security and the rights of peoples must be dealt with in the United Nations. New complex intra-State conflicts have increased dramatically. We must learn from the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia. Millions of individuals have suffered in these conflicts. Through the electronic media, the world closely follows the unfolding tragedies. The hopes of the victims for a peaceful future are shared by all of us. The United Nations and the international community are expected to provide answers.

We must focus on the capacity to react directly and quickly and to prevent crises from getting out of hand. Rapid response can be that which separates failure from success. The creation of the United Nations standby system was an important step in the right direction. We must now take it one step further.

The establishment of a rapidly deployable headquarters in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will reduce planning time and response time for future operations. The planning of new operations cannot start from scratch every time. Denmark continues its efforts with like-minded countries to establish a multilateral brigade at a state of high readiness within the standby system. A well-balanced, pre-planned force structure will greatly improve the ability to act quickly and effectively.

The need for new conflict strategies was also underlined by the Rwanda evaluation initiated by Denmark.

Preventive diplomacy is called for. Regional organizations must be strengthened to take on more responsibility in preventing conflicts and in post-conflict peace-building. The United Nations cannot carry the entire burden itself. The regional organizations must assist the United Nations, not replace it.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which I shall have the honour and responsibility of chairing in 1997, is one such important regional organization. One of the tenets of the OSCE is "OSCE first". This implies that the OSCE will be a primary instrument for conflict prevention in its region, thus relieving the United Nations.

Arms control and arms reduction add their contribution to conflict prevention. Two and a half years of intensive negotiations have resulted in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) now open for signature. On behalf of the Kingdom of Denmark, I signed the Treaty this morning. The CTBT will end the qualitative development of nuclear weapons. It is a necessary supplementary component to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It will strengthen progress towards complete global nuclear disarmament.

When it comes to conventional weapons, anti-personnel landmines continue to pose a daily, grave threat to people in many parts of the world. They are, at

the same time, an unacceptable obstacle to the resettlement of displaced populations. The new landmine Protocol to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, adopted in May, is an improvement. Denmark will ratify it shortly, without reservations, but we are still far away from the only viable solution to the landmine problem, which is a total, worldwide ban. The Danish Government has decided to renounce unilaterally the use of anti-personnel landmines in the Danish armed forces. We encourage similar decisions by other Governments.

Furthermore, the present state of technology for detecting unexploded mines is ineffective. Public and private initiative, ingenuity and funding must be combined to create new technological options for landmine detection. The International Conference on Mine-clearance Technology, held in Denmark in July this year, has stimulated this endeavour. We welcome the initiatives of Canada and Japan to carry the efforts further.

National initiatives must be assisted by international efforts to speed up mine clearance. To this effect, the General Assembly will be presented with a draft resolution on assistance in mine clearance.

My second priority is human rights. They have come to play a visible role in international relations and on the agenda of many United Nations forums. The Vienna World Conference on Human Rights made it clear that the promotion and protection of all human rights is a legitimate concern, indeed a duty, of all States and the international community. Criticism of human rights abuses can no longer be rejected as interference in internal affairs. Indeed, criticism should be seen as a contribution to our cooperative efforts to strengthen respect for human rights. The adoption of international instruments is the result of our cooperation. They are the true universally-accepted bases for continued progress in the human rights field.

The overall goal is to promote and protect the rights of individual human beings — our citizens. This leaves room for each society to find its own way to further democracy and respect for human rights. No one is trying to impose a single model. When we freely adhere to international human rights standards as our own, we give up no part of our culture, no part of our national sovereignty. On the contrary, individuals enjoying full human rights are the best guarantee of national culture and sovereignty.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights plays a particularly important role in the promotion of human rights. During its membership term, Denmark intends to contribute actively to the Commission's work in four prime areas: the fight against torture; the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples; strengthening the High Commissioner and his office; and the right to development. Let me in this context pay tribute to the important contribution of non-governmental organizations.

I cannot mention the area of human rights without referring to the grave situation in Myanmar. It is, indeed, a tragedy that, since the release in July last year of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, developments in that country have gone from bad to worse.

Time and again, Denmark and its European Union partners have urged the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to respect human rights and to restore democracy to the Burmese people. Our appeals have been ignored. I repeat them here in the strongest possible terms. This tragedy must end.

I express my deep dismay at the unwillingness of the SLORC to discuss the death in custody, on 22 June 1996 of Mr. James Nichols. Mr. Nichols served as honorary consul for several European States, including Denmark.

The Government of Denmark intends to keep the situation in Burma high on the international agenda until fundamental improvements are seen.

Economic and social development is the third area I want to emphasize. Human conflicts have many causes. If we want a lasting foundation for peace in our own societies and internationally, we need to address the problems of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion.

The plight of the poorest countries is a matter of particular concern. The United Nations should play a crucial role in addressing this problem.

The need for development assistance is as great as ever. The poorest countries do not attract private investment. They do not have the potential to benefit from liberalization of international trade. The current trend in official development assistance is deplorable. Official development assistance fell to 0.27 per cent of gross national product in 1995. This is the lowest level since the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent was set in

1970. Unfortunately, a number of major donors are still reducing their development programmes. In 1995, only four countries were above the target of 0.7 per cent. Denmark, for its part, continues to contribute one per cent of its gross national product.

Economic growth, desirable as it is, cannot be equated with development unless it is accompanied by economic and social progress for all groups. Social progress for all is not an automatic result of economic growth. The Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development stated that

> "the eradication of poverty, the generation of ... productive employment, and the enhancement of social integration" *(A/CONF.166/9, p. 24)*

should be an integral part of policies furthering economic growth.

I would particularly emphasize the need to ensure an effective follow-up to the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The United Nations plays a crucial role in humanitarian assistance. Recent experience, including the Rwanda evaluation, has stressed the need for coordination of all actors in the humanitarian field. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations has gradually established itself as a focal point for coordination of needs assessment and appeals. I urge all Members of the United Nations family with humanitarian assistance programmes to engage actively in DHA-sponsored coordination efforts.

The fourth priority area is the environment. The Brundtland Report and the Rio Conference on Environment and Development clearly emphasized the global nature of environmental issues. The concept of sustainable development has now firmly taken its place on our political agenda.

Much has been achieved. Yet it is uncertain whether the accomplishments match the growing problems. Armed conflicts, poverty, ignorance and in some cases even short-sightedness and greed are contributors to the continued wear and tear on the environment.

The special session of the General Assembly, to take place in 1997, will be the next opportunity for Governments to review at a high level the implementation of Agenda 21. The special session must look at the need for readjusting, revitalizing and increasing our efforts to cope with the challenges.

The Government of Denmark fully supports this process. We will continue our support of activities in areas in need, such as safeguarding biodiversity, promoting renewable energy and reducing erosion, desertification and deforestation.

I have dealt briefly with four high-priority areas. In the view of my Government, the United Nations has a key role to play in addressing these problems. But is the Organization fully capable of taking up this challenge? Regrettably, the answer is no.

We must insist that all Members honour their treaty obligations and pay their contributions to the United Nations in full, on time and without preconditions. The present state of affairs is unacceptable. Undermining the United Nations is in the interest of no one. Members that are intentionally running behind in paying their assessed contributions must realize that they cannot expect their influence in the various United Nations organs to remain unaffected.

Furthermore, the United Nations must reflect present political realities. This should be borne in mind in the efforts to agree on reforming the Security Council. No doubt, the United Nations must continue its efforts to revitalize itself in the economic and social field. The quality of its work must continuously be improved. The main objective is to increase its impact at the country level to the benefit of the poor. Denmark supports a comprehensive and coherent reform of the present system in areas such as institutions, governance structure, staff, administration and future funding.

Little can be achieved without the political will of the Member States. I agree with the recent findings of a task force sponsored by a well-known American institution, the Council on Foreign Relations. It states that

> "the United Nations is in crisis ... principally because Members States ... have failed to pay their bills, have given the United Nations responsibilities without the power to carry them out, and have blamed the United Nations for failures in national policies."

In conclusion, let me underline the fundamental interest of my country in the establishment of a world community in which States, as well as each individual,

may live in conditions of peace and welfare. Well-functioning international organizations, not least our world Organization, are cornerstones in this endeavour. Denmark will bring its dedicated contribution.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Japan.

Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Japan, His Excellency Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Hashimoto (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; English text furnished by the delegation*): I should like, first of all, to extend my warmest compliments to His Excellency Mr. Razali Ismail, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly last week. I also pay tribute to the efforts of His Excellency Mr. Diego Freitas do Amaral, who demonstrated great skill in presiding over the historic fiftieth-anniversary session.

Last year commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This year marks the fortieth anniversary of Japan's admission to the United Nations. Over the past four decades, Japan has consistently made its commitment to the United Nations one of the main pillars of its foreign policy and has steadfastly supported the United Nations.

At the same time, Japan has benefited immensely from the international system, including the United Nations. I should like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for the support Japan has received from the international community in building the stability and prosperity it enjoys today. In addition, as the role of the United Nations grows in importance in the new post-cold-war environment, I hereby affirm that Japan is resolved to play a more active role by further strengthening the cooperation it extends to the Organization for the sake of world peace and prosperity.

My ultimate foreign policy goal is the creation of a better world for future generations, a world free of poverty and conflict. I intend to achieve this goal through change and creation, which is the mission of my Cabinet. Children who can talk vividly about their dreams of the future are the world's treasure. Is it not our grave responsibility, as leaders of the international community, to build an environment in which the children of the next generation can flourish?

Efforts towards the creation of a better world for future generations must be based on the following three pillars: first, securing world peace and stability; secondly, promoting development so as to bring growth and stability to developing countries; and thirdly, ensuring the well-being of each and every citizen throughout global society. These three pillars are interrelated, and we will be unable to achieve a world free of poverty and conflict if any one of the three is missing, or if only one of them is in place.

Since taking office, I have pursued foreign policies based on the strong belief that Japan should be a nation that works for world peace and stability on its own initiative. In accordance with this position, Japan intends to play a leading role in the building of each of these three pillars, as I shall subsequently explain. These are precisely the areas which the United Nations of the twenty-first century will be expected to address.

The first pillar is securing world peace and stability. This is surely of the utmost importance, because unless this is achieved, future generations will be left with nothing but confusion and destruction. At this time of ever greater interdependence, world peace is indivisible. Instability in one region can readily lead to the instability of other regions and, in turn, to the instability of the world as a whole. It is Japan's intention not simply to secure its own peace and stability but, consonant with the philosophy embodied in the Constitution of Japan, it will strive to secure global peace and stability and make greater efforts, commensurate with its political and economic status, for the prevention and resolution of conflicts in various regions of the world.

It goes without saying that, as a nation in Asia, Japan will spare no effort in securing peace and stability in the region. The recent incident of infiltration by a North Korean submarine makes us all the more aware of the importance of easing tensions on the Korean peninsula. Realization of the four-party meeting, which was proposed by the leaders of the United States and the Republic of Korea last April, is very important, and I should like on this occasion to reiterate Japan's support for that proposal. In an effort to further strengthen the achievements of the Cambodian peace process, which has proved to be a successful example of the international community's peace-building efforts, and looking ahead to

the elections that Cambodia will hold on its own for the first time beginning next year, Japan intends to continue to extend assistance to that country. Japan welcomes the fact that Russia, also located in the Asian region, is continuing its reform process in the light of the results of the recent presidential election. Moreover, by actively participating in political and security dialogue, for example in the context of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Japan is endeavouring to further promote confidence-building in the region.

At the same time, Japan is actively engaged in addressing issues in other regions, for example by cooperating with United Nations activities to foster global peace. During the latter part of August I visited five countries in Latin America where I witnessed at first hand the success of the democratization process and steady progress in economic reform. Japan intends to strengthen its assistance for the stable development of this region.

In the former Yugoslavia, Japan has contributed both personnel and financing to the local and national elections recently held in Bosnia in view of their importance in the formation of a democratic political system. As a member of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, Japan will continue to participate actively in the civilian aspects of international efforts towards the implementation of the peace process.

On the occasion of Foreign Minister Ikeda's visit to the Middle East in August, and Chairman Arafat's visit to Tokyo in mid-September, Japan called for continued negotiations among the parties to the Middle East peace process. Japan is determined to continue to contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to the advancement of the peace process by extending assistance to the parties concerned, including assistance to the Palestinian people, and by participating in multilateral talks.

Japan is gravely concerned about the current situation in Iraq. It strongly hopes that Iraq will listen to the opinion of the international community and comply in good faith with the relevant Security Council resolutions so that the situation will be settled as soon as possible.

In order to resolve the Afghanistan issue it is important that foreign interference cease and that the success of the peace and reconciliation efforts of the United Nations is ensured. Toward that end, Japan is providing an expert on that region to serve as a political counsellor at the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan.

The ongoing regional conflicts in Africa, including the situations in Burundi, Liberia and Angola, are of grave concern. The international community must actively support the conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution efforts of African countries as well as the strengthening of their capabilities in this regard. In addition to extending financial contributions to the Organization of African Unity and the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, Japan is extending assistance to peacekeeping operations, refugee assistance, rehabilitation assistance, and assistance for democratization in the form of personnel and intellectual input.

Peacekeeping operations are an effective complement to the collective security function as originally envisaged in the United Nations Charter, and they supplement the conflict-resolution efforts of the parties themselves. It is important that the international community should continue to support peacekeeping operations but also that it should seek their further reform. Experiences in recent years have reaffirmed the effectiveness of traditional peacekeeping operations. Their role in preventing conflicts, as exemplified by the success of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), is likely to become increasingly important. Japan will continue to participate in the discussions that are now under way among interested Member States on measures to improve the rapid reaction capabilities of the peacekeeping operations. Japan is participating in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights and intends hereafter to cooperate actively and as much as possible in peacekeeping operations.

I believe that, as it responds to regional conflicts, the United Nations has the potential to fulfil, in a practical manner, an extremely effective function through preventive diplomacy. I should like to propose that a meeting of eminent persons be convened to explore means of enhancing the Organization's preventive diplomacy capability.

In order to maintain international peace and stability, it is essential to further promote disarmament efforts and to strengthen the regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In particular, Japan would vigorously emphasize the importance for the international community of promoting realistic and steady efforts for nuclear disarmament with the aim of realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. As the only country to have suffered nuclear devastation,

Japan has been making precisely this appeal to the international community as a top priority in accordance with its own philosophy.

Thus I am deeply gratified by the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by the General Assembly with the support of many Member States; this indeed marks a historic step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Having the opportunity just this morning to sign the Treaty gave me great personal satisfaction. In order to realize the early entry into force of the Treaty, Japan would like to call upon those countries which have expressed opposition to the Treaty to accede to it at the earliest possible date from the broader perspective of promoting nuclear disarmament. For its part, Japan will continue to make contributions in the field of verification of nuclear testing, by such means as expanding the technical cooperation on seismic technologies that it extends to concerned developing countries. As a next step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, I should like to call for the early commencement of negotiations on a cut-off treaty which would prohibit the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

Japan takes the problems posed by landmines very seriously. Japan supports international efforts toward a total, worldwide ban on anti-personnel landmines. Furthermore, in order to reinforce international support for measures to deal with anti-personnel landmines, Japan is preparing to host a meeting at the senior official level in Tokyo early next year.

The promotion of development to bring about the growth and stability of developing countries is the second pillar required for the creation of a better world for future generations. Development is a prerequisite for peace; at the same time, the maintenance of peace is a precondition for development. As a leading donor, Japan will work to further enhance its official development assistance; at the same time, it is keenly aware of its responsibility to lead the discussion on issues relating to the proper form and provision of such assistance.

Based on this recognition, Japan has been calling for a new development strategy. The central ideas in this strategy are an emphasis on the ownership by developing countries of the development process and on the establishment of a new global partnership in which developed and developing countries, released from the North-South confrontational mind-set, cooperate with each other. Moreover, it is important to address development not simply with official development assistance, but also by organically combining various elements including trade, investment, economic policy, debt relief, technology transfer, and the development of social infrastructure. It is also important to extend assistance that is most appropriate to the circumstances of the particular country while paying adequate attention to the efforts made by developing countries in the promotion of democratization and the introduction of market-oriented economies. Furthermore, Japan attaches importance to the setting of development targets and the reinvestment in development activities of savings resulting from reforms, as well as to promoting coordination between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

We have witnessed the development of various forms of regional cooperation, such as the Southern African Development Community, MERCOSUR, and the South Pacific Forum; such regional cooperation is an important element for development. Emphasizing the significance of South-South cooperation, Japan is utilizing the Japanese Human Resources Development Fund in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in order to support South-South cooperation.

In the context of developing countries, Japan attaches particular importance to the development of Africa, where poverty and conflict are particularly acute. Japan will actively promote its initiatives on assistance to African countries, which Foreign Minister Ikeda presented during the general debate of the Ninth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, convened in South Africa this past spring. In order to give new momentum to African development, Japan is hoping to convene the second meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in 1998, which would follow a preparatory meeting that will take place, also in Tokyo, in 1997.

The third pillar to which I would like to refer is the guarantee of the well-being of every citizen of the global community. It is important to embrace the global community as a whole, and to give heed to the importance of each and every one of its members. Indeed, the peace of mind of individuals contributes to the peace and stability of the world.

Japan intends to address more actively various social problems such as the environment, population, AIDS, drugs, terrorism, organized crime, refugees and the status of women, as well as problems relating to food and energy, which may become more acute in the years to come. Concerned about environmental issues, Japan will

host the third conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Kyoto in December next year. Japan will make every effort toward the adoption at that conference of an effective and practical document prescribing an international framework to prevent global warming after the year 2000. I should like to call for the valuable cooperation of every Member State and international organization concerned for the success of that conference.

Recognizing that it is important that each and every human being be cared for, throughout more than 30 years of political activity, I have focused my attention on the protection of the most vulnerable among us and to the elimination of poverty. The Initiative for a Caring World which I proposed on the occasion of the Lyons summit of the Group of Seven is an extension of this endeavour. Under this initiative, Japan intends, first of all, to share with developing countries its experiences in the field of social security, including health care, hygiene and social welfare services so that they can develop more effective services in these areas, and secondly, to exchange experiences and knowledge with other developed countries with respect to issues that they commonly confront.

As I stated at the outset, I should like to urge world leaders to join hands and strengthen their efforts particularly on behalf of the well-being of children. Ever since the Japan Committee for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was established in 1955, my mother has been dedicating herself to promoting its activities. This has had a profound influence on me, and I too have been actively engaged in its activities. Japan has been contributing approximately $30 million to UNICEF annually and it intends hereafter to strengthen its cooperation. As part of its initiatives on assistance to Africa which I mentioned earlier, Japan announced that it would provide assistance for the expansion of education and the eradication of polio on that continent. It also intends to enhance its assistance for the protection of the health of very young children in developing countries.

The protection and promotion of human rights is the foundation of world peace and prosperity. Japan is determined to support the democratic development of developing countries and at the same time hopes that the United Nations will further enhance its activities in the field of human rights.

As we approach the twenty-first century, it is essential that the United Nations itself play a role that responds adequately to the growing expectations of the international community based on the three pillars to which I have been referring. Towards that end, reforms that strengthen the functions of the Organization are necessary. There is a consensus among the United Nations membership regarding the importance of the new role envisaged for the Organization as well as the urgent need for comprehensive United Nations reform. However, when it comes to concrete measures for reform, a convergence of views among Member States is yet to emerge.

With the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we witnessed an increase in the momentum for reform. It should be the aim of this fifty-first session of the General Assembly to maintain this momentum so that a general agreement on the major elements of reform can be reached before the session ends. The entire United Nations membership should then make every effort to reach an agreement on concrete measures to realize United Nations reform in the near future. If the United Nations simply engages in repetitious debate and proves incapable of reforming itself to adapt to the changing times, its very credibility could be severely undermined. It is thus incumbent upon the membership as a whole to be tenacious in its efforts to achieve reform.

Security Council reform, and reforms in administrative and financial areas and in economic and social areas comprise the threefold centrepiece of United Nations reform. I should like to point out the importance, above all, of carrying out these reforms as a whole in a balanced manner. For example, even though there may be a financial crisis, if we were to carry out reforms in that area alone, separately from reforms in the other two areas, it would not correspond to the original basic concept of United Nations reform, which was to seek to strengthen the functions of the Organization as a whole.

Permit me to present the views of Japan regarding reforms in these three areas. I should like first of all to discuss the reform of the Security Council. Inasmuch as the Security Council bears the primary responsibility for carrying out the major purpose of the United Nations, namely, the achievement and maintenance of world peace and stability, its importance is obvious. As it has indicated on previous occasions, Japan, with the endorsement of many other countries, is prepared to discharge its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council in accordance with its basic philosophy of the non-resort to the use of force prohibited by its Constitution.

Until the reform of the Security Council is realized, Japan is determined to contribute to the work of the Security Council for the sake of international peace and security, and has presented its candidature for non-permanent membership on the Council in this session of the General Assembly. Responding to the strong support and confidence that have already been expressed with respect to its candidature, Japan will continue to make every effort so that it can play an active role on the Security Council.

As I stated earlier, Japan attaches great importance to development. More than two thirds of United Nations Member States are developing countries. If the United Nations is to aim at achieving a world free of poverty and conflicts, it is crucial that discussions on development be further promoted within the Organization. In this, the functions and role of the Economic and Social Council should be strengthened and the integration of the various development issues with which the United Nations is engaged should be ensured.

Japan is the second largest financial contributor to the United Nations; its assessment for the regular budget has increased to 15.65 per cent for next year, and is likely to increase further. Japan will not shirk the tremendous responsibility it bears in financially supporting the United Nations. However, with respect to the scale of assessment, I wish to reiterate that Japan attaches importance not only to the concept of capacity to pay but also to the responsibility to pay. Japan also welcomes the endeavours of the Secretariat towards administrative streamlining and rationalizing.

Throughout the four decades since it joined the United Nations Japan has faithfully upheld the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It has consistently attached importance to the United Nations, and it is proud to be among the countries that have made the greatest contributions to its overall activities. Disarmament, initiatives in the area of nuclear non-proliferation, an appeal for a new strategy on development issues, an active addressing of global issues, as well as considerable financial contributions to the United Nations — these are the issues to which Japan has attached profound importance in recent years.

I wish to conclude my statement in this general debate by reemphasizing Japan's readiness to participate in the Security Council, which is at the centre of United Nations activity, as well as to engage more actively and more constructively in the aforementioned areas of endeavour in order to discharge its responsibility with regard to world peace and prosperity.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Japan for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: I now call upon the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, His Excellency the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy.

Mr. Axworthy (Canada): I am happy to join other speakers in warmly congratulating His Excellency Mr. Razali Ismail on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly. I also wish to express Canada's deep appreciation of the excellent manner in which Mr. Freitas do Amaral managed the deliberations of the fiftieth session of the Assembly.

Forty years ago, in the depths of the cold war, the General Assembly authorized the setting up of a peacekeeping force in Suez. Thus emerged an important tool for the international community, one that has since served the cause of peace in many different forms around the world.

(*spoke in French*)

Canadians take special pride in peacekeeping because the concept was developed in part by their Foreign Minister, Lester B. Pearson, who received the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts.

As we reflect on the fortieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping, there are certain conclusions to be drawn. The United Nations has played a crucial role throughout the world by dint of its peacekeeping role. Innovation is both necessary and possible within the United Nations, and in our time, different as it may be, the spirit of internationalism, of commitment to cooperation, calls to us once again.

(*spoke in English*)

In a new and changing global environment internationalism is ever more important for all nations, large or small, weak or powerful. Changing times have set for us a new broad agenda, which includes focusing on the security needs of individuals — in other words, on

sustainable human security. Unfortunately, the new times have not sufficiently been reflected by a rededication to the United Nations as an expression of the spirit of internationalism. There remains too often a tendency to act according to old power configurations rather than to seek out collective approaches that address the roots of conflict and attempt to resolve them through common action.

The need for recommitment to the United Nations is clear, and so too is the need for the renewal, restructuring and refocusing of the Organization and its various bodies and agencies. In implementing this agenda of United Nations renewal we will no doubt encounter difficulties and differences of opinion. But this should not discourage us. We need the courage to innovate on two fronts, grappling with a new and complex world agenda and restructuring the United Nations to respond effectively to that agenda.

The basic mandate of the United Nations at its founding was the prevention of international conflict. As peacekeeping has changed over time, one can see the evolution of a security agenda itself, from being a simple buffer between States to an international responsibility for maintaining order and an involvement in reconstruction. The range of activities in recent times has been impressive, from Haiti to Cambodia, from the Golan Heights to El Salvador, from Bosnia to the peace accords now being signed in Guatemala.

That range demonstrates that the international response to threats to security has gone well beyond the initial definition, which was limited to dealing with cross-border aggression. Rather, in a continuum of threats, there is an increasing focus on conflicts that take place within borders but that have severe ripple effects throughout the entire international system. These types of conflict are still, in peacekeeping terms, largely uncharted waters, and of course there are differences of view on how best to respond.

What is clear is the need for a new tool kit for the United Nations to respond to a variety of different situations. In this context I am glad to note that most of the recommendations made in the rapid-reaction study submitted by Canada last year are now being implemented. Canada will continue to support United Nations efforts to establish a headquarters that will enhance its ability to respond rapidly and with flexibility. But that is only one tool. Many more are needed, especially in the area of prevention of disputes and in the arduous and complex task of peace-building.

The failure of conflict prevention in Rwanda, as outlined in the Rwanda evaluation report, has made abundantly clear the need to enlarge the concept of peace-building to embrace prevention as well as peacemaking and reconstruction. Preventive action will require much greater commitment from United Nations Members to intervene early.

In Canada, we are currently focusing our approach to these issues. We have started reworking our own international tool kit to improve our ability to initiate and support peace-building operations in areas such as mediation, dialogue, human-rights monitoring, judicial reform, police training and demobilization of military forces. We look forward to cooperating with other nations that are also exploring similar innovative approaches.

The search for new tools and the means to utilize them collectively cannot, however, be a substitute for the reinforcement of existing mechanisms to build peace. We are about to take a historic step forward on the nuclear-disarmament agenda. Today, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was opened for signature. That Treaty is the result of decades of hope and effort by people around the world. This morning I signed the Treaty on behalf of Canada. We call upon all States Members of the United Nations to do the same.

The children of tomorrow should, we hope, never have to know what a nuclear test is. If we can succeed in this goal, and if we can vigorously pursue the goal of systematically and progressively reducing nuclear weapons, with the ultimate goal of their elimination, we can ensure that those children know less and less about the most terrible scourge to face humanity.

If the world can focus its energies on ending the testing of sophisticated and expensive nuclear weapons, we believe that there is real hope for setting ourselves the goal of ending the use of the most simple, cheap and, on a daily basis, most destructive weapon in use today, the anti-personnel landmine.

We have all witnessed the suffering, death and horrifying mutilation caused by mines. Canada, along with many other countries and organizations, is engaged in mine-clearance operations. But the simple fact is that anti-personnel mines are being laid far faster then we can pull them out of the ground. This is not just a disarmament issue. It strikes at the very heart of development, and the thousands upon thousands of

victims affected every year pose a stark challenge to humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts.

Canada will host an international strategy session this autumn, bringing together like-minded Governments, international agencies and non-governmental groups to provide impetus and direction to international efforts towards a global ban on anti-personnel mines. I hope this will help to catalyse efforts to build a consensus on a strong, forward-looking resolution for this fifty-first session. As such, it can provide further impetus to multilateral negotiations on a full global ban.

Mr. Turnquest (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

A third milestone in this area is the Chemical Weapons Convention, the first international treaty that aims to introduce a complete, global ban on an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. It is of the greatest importance that it be brought into force as soon as possible.

(*spoke in French*)

During the cold war, we re-examined and redefined the dimensions of international security to embrace the concept of sustainable human security. The rule of law and good governance are as important to maintaining global peace as disarmament measures. We are also coming to realize that real security cannot be guaranteed by the State alone, but must involve civil society as well.

(*spoke in English*)

These realizations stemmed in part from a growing sense of insecurity at the newly emerging but deadly threats of what one writer has described as "the underside of globalization", including environmental degradation, crime and terrorism, and a lack of equity between the peoples of the Earth.

The recent series of United Nations conferences has served both to define the concept of sustainable human security and to bring home the growing challenges to the security of the individual. The road map is clear; we do not need to study it any further. Now is the time to move forward in a concerted, comprehensive way.

There are already notable examples of what the United Nations system has achieved, such as programmes to improve children's health and strategies to combat such environmental threats as depletion of the ozone layer.

But as important as these advances are, there remain far too many paper commitments instead of real progress on the ground. Currently we are swamped by a plethora of agendas, blueprints and plans that run the risk of exhausting the ability of donor nations to respond to or have a real impact on those most in need. Too many bodies are established to implement these plans, creating jurisdictional confusion and an overlap in implementation. We need to recognize that in the realm of sustainable human security, Governments are not alone. The groups and networks that have emerged around the world representing women, indigenous peoples and children, along with business and finance, are now major players, and we need a system of governance that recognizes this and brings them into partnership with Governments themselves.

One example of a new system is the Arctic Council, which was inaugurated in Ottawa last week. This multilateral regional body brings together Arctic nations and indigenous groups to cooperate in the sustainable development and environmental protection of a unique and precious part of the globe. The Council represents a new model of international organization, bringing together people and States to share their energy and resources in a common cause.

The upcoming World Food Summit organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides another opportunity to combine governmental and non-governmental efforts. As a major agricultural producer, Canada looks forward to working with other nations and with non-governmental organizations and representatives on solutions to the problem of food security through approaches to technology transfer, financing and land reform.

As private trade and investment flows into developing countries increasingly outweigh the significance of official development assistance, issues such as terms of trade and debt take on even greater significance. At the same time, new and complex issues are emerging which existing international structures are not well placed to address.

One major emerging issue is the relationship between trade and labour standards. We are pleased to see the International Labour Organization (ILO) focus on

international convention on the elimination of forced child labour. There can be no clearer example of an issue where cooperation and dialogue with other international and regional organizations, particularly between the ILO and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and with non-governmental groups is required in order to produce synergy rather than overlap.

Sustainable human security means providing for basic needs not just in economic ways, but in political ways as well. Recent conflicts have demonstrated by negative example that respect for human rights and democratic principles is fundamental to the prevention of conflict.

Last year, Canada commissioned work on the human rights components of the United Nations field operations. I am pleased to announce today that we will immediately begin compiling a roster of qualified Canadian human rights experts available for rapid deployment as part of larger peace-building operations. We look forward to coordinating our efforts with those of Norway and others to ensure coherent, focused support for such United Nations efforts.

In 1998 we will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This will be an occasion not only to reaffirm our commitment to its principles, but also to consider further practical steps to implement them. One step we will take is to promote, as part of the fiftieth anniversary, the preparations led by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, international dialogue on means to combat hate propaganda, which is so often the trigger of human tragedies such as genocide and "ethnic cleansing".

The establishment of international war-crimes Tribunals in The Hague for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda represents a critical element of necessary progress in the field of human rights. They signal our determination to hold accountable all individuals guilty of committing atrocities, be they officials of the State or extra- or para-State actors. Above all, they signal our determination to break the cycle of hatred. It is for these reasons that Canada strongly urges the prompt establishment of a permanent international criminal court as a new instrument in the fight against massive human rights violations.

There is one aspect of human rights that my Government and I have personally decided to make an utmost priority: the rights of children. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Swedish Government and commend the organizers of last month's World Congress on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. It is Canada's fervent hope that this Congress will lead to the implementation of the most effective practical measures, as well as to the adoption and ratification of legally binding international instruments to combat child slavery and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. We should move resolutely to conclude negotiation of the Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

We will work through our own development funds with all countries interested in similar goals.

The concept of sustainable democracy requires, beyond a commitment to respect for basic human rights, also a commitment to democratic development. In the last decade we have seen the United Nations involved in the promotion of democracy from Cambodia to South Africa to Haiti. Other multilateral organizations are also playing an important role, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the recent elections in Bosnia. Recent conflicts have demonstrated the importance of stable democratic structures in promoting sustainable human security. They have also highlighted the need to distinguish between legitimate aspirations and dangerous tendencies towards fragmentation. Attempts to structure political participation around culturally or ethnically "pure" mini-States must be resisted by the international community.

(*spoke in French*)

Haiti has been a critical test for the United Nations. The promotion of democratization has been an integral part of security. Concerted international effort is needed to support democracy, not merely for the sake of one leader or one election, but as part of the ongoing process of laying the foundations of democratic institutions. We must recognize this and must make the commitments needed to ensure that the United Nations can work effectively for peace and stability in Haiti.

(*spoke in English*)

Nigeria, Burundi and Burma are among the most recent challenges to our collective ability to support democratic aspirations. Canada remains firmly committed to the restoration of democracy in these countries, and to working in these countries and with our partners, bilaterally, multilaterally and within the Commonwealth and *francophonie* to this end.

The explosion of information technologies presents great dangers but also great opportunities for human security. Extremist groups can spread their message of hate and intolerance more easily, and we have only to look to Bosnia and Rwanda to see the tragic effects this can have. Yet at the same time, these technologies have placed powerful tools for the strengthening of civil society in the hands of millions of individual citizens and groups.

The development of information technologies raises many other questions, including issues of access and of countering abuses such as the transmission of child pornography or terrorism. The Economic and Social Council has mandated a study of these issues. In Canada we believe we have solid knowledge and expertise in these area in terms of technology and jurisprudence and we will make major contributions to finding solutions.

I have outlined some of the major issues that require conceptual innovation on the part of the United Nations. The counterpart to conceptual innovation is innovation in renewing existing United Nations structures and developing new ones. We should not hesitate to eliminate those programmes or bodies that no longer serve any useful purpose, to reorient those whose mission so requires, and to consolidate and eliminate duplication. Nor should we hesitate to create new instruments, within existing resources, to deal with the challenge of the day. Reform is more than just cost-cutting, though that aspect must not be ignored.

Our first priority is the ongoing financial crisis the United Nations faces. We have seen some encouraging progress in the establishment and early results of the Efficiency Board.

Perhaps more importantly, there is a growing awareness of the need for financial and administrative restructuring. But much remains to be done. I cannot simply content myself here with calling yet again for all Members to pay their dues unconditionally — in full and on time. I have to ask why it is that over half the Member States are failing to meet this standard, and some are failing to pay at all. Pressures on government budgets is no excuse; Canada has in recent years undertaken some of the most severe expenditure cuts of any developed country. Yet we have maintained our commitment to pay our dues in full and on time, because we believe that the United Nations responds to key international priorities.

Perhaps some Members are withholding dues as a form of blackmail, hoping to pressure the United Nations into reforms through fiscal starvation. This is both wrong-headed and short-sighted. An organization in crisis will not have the energy required to tackle genuine reform. What is needed here is political will, both in paying dues and in moving forward in the difficult task of reviewing the scale of assessments to better reflect the ability to pay. Canada hopes that others will join us in demonstrating that will during the current session of the Assembly.

Another priority is to strengthen the effectiveness of the Security Council by giving it greater accountability, representativeness, transparency and responsibility. Canada attaches particular importance to the need to ensure meaningful participation in decision-making by those Members whose nationals — military or civilian — are in the crossfire of the conflicts that the Council is debating.

The Council needs to address two issues: its role and its composition. On the former, if the Council is to come to terms with the more complex nature of international peace and security, it must be prepared to assume a greater role in conflict prevention. This will require cooperation among the Security Council, the Secretary-General and other Governments and non-governmental actors in identifying and addressing emergency crises.

On the latter issue, the Council can address criticisms of it as a closed body whose membership does not fully reflect changes in the world since 1945 by increasing the number of seats. The distribution of those seats should take into account in the first instance the contribution of Members to the broader purposes of the United Nations Charter, and also the need for equitable geographic representation. Membership has its privileges, but more importantly, it must bring with it a special responsibility and commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and to sustainable human security.

(*spoke in French*)

Equally important is the revitalization of the General Assembly. The United Nations General Assembly is the one body that brings together all nations of the world in their full diversity. It represents on a global scale both the essence and the challenge of democracy. The General Assembly must achieve consensus and take decisions on the new human security agenda. It must promote sustainable human security, a concept that combines the

need to husband natural resources, to generate growth and to ensure peace and security.

(*spoke in English*)

I have outlined today some of the steps that Canada has taken to advance thinking, to improve existing practices and to develop new ones. And I know that other Member States have been working towards the very same end. We now have many options to consider and discuss.

But plans, proposals and studies are not enough. As the poet Yeats said, "In dreams begins responsibility." It is easy to dream; it is much harder to act. We have a renewed vision of multilateralism, and a renewed mandate not just for the prevention of conflict, but for the nurturing of peace. We have started work on making that vision a reality. We all recognize how daunting this task is as we embark upon it; but we must persist, for the task is as vital as it is difficult.

We in 1996 must show ourselves capable of restoring the spirit of 1956 when, in the deepest freeze of the cold-war climate, the United Nations gave birth to peacekeeping and changed international relations forever. We need to find within ourselves the ability and the will to innovate and the persistence to implement our innovations. It is in the interest of each one of us, as much as it is in the interests of all of us, to do so.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa.

Mr. Moussa (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): This session is being held amid a very sensitive and delicate international situation which is generally characterized by political and socio-economic concerns. This is particularly evident all over the developing world, which is overpopulated and simultaneously overburdened with problems of backwardness and the challenges of development. The hopes that were raised with the end of the cold war, heralding the advent of a new era in which cooperation and *détente* would prevail, soon were shattered in the midst of these problems and these concerns. We are currently facing conflicting phenomena, where elements of complementarity and integration coincide with tendencies towards division and disunity. The technology and communications revolution runs parallel to the eruption of national conflicts and ethnic animosities. Ambitions of leadership overlap practices of hegemony. This has created a serious conceptual confusion which the international order, in its current form, cannot address in an effective or deterring manner. Indeed, this order, due to its obvious double standards, might have contributed to the intensification of the era's negative aspects at the expense of its positive aspects and gains.

Certainly, the logic of evolution and the rules of transformation indicate that the stages of change carry within them a potential risk as well as elements of rivalry, unless an objective and conducive environment exists, accompanied by a forward-looking vision and a set of highly advanced values that are crystallized through coordinated and concerted efforts. This is precisely what did not happen. The dichotomy between the North and the South is widening. The lack of common understanding among world cultures and civilizations is still present. This has caused discord in world thinking and created mutual suspicions that not only pose an overwhelming threat, jeopardizing the march of political progress and the activities of economic development as well as the fabric of social development, but also have raised questions as to whether the benefits of science and technology lead to world security and stability, or quite the opposite.

In connection with contemporary international politics, it is really most alarming that attempts are being made to marginalize the United Nations at a time when the world is in need of further understanding, better coordination and accelerated interdependence. It would have been more logical to call for the strengthening of this Organization, so that it could perform its role in achieving these objectives in a truly democratic manner, with the participation of all the countries of the world with their diverse cultures, societies, sizes, orientations and achievements. This is particularly true since the United Nations Charter, in our view — a view shared by many others — still represents a major instrument governing international life, and since any international order, be it old or new, must be based on a solid foundation that respects rights, determines obligations and opens the door to an era of interaction among societies on the basis of acceptance and understanding, not imposition or oppression.

We are definitely aware that the challenges of tomorrow are different from those of yesterday. We are also aware that the United Nations, in its current culture, may not be able, one way or another, to deal with future challenges. However, this must be a subject for discussion to build consensus among us, not a matter to be determined by a few or to be decided unilaterally.

For these reasons, it is imperative to strive collectively to build a common political will to strengthen the United Nations, to enhance its effectiveness and to restore its credibility in order to maintain world stability and security.

The annals of this Organization abound with historical achievements and it continues to make progress in dealing with the problems of our world. An in-depth reading of the Secretary-General's reports on political, economic and social situations in the world reassures us of this role and we urge that it be upheld, because it addresses the present and explores the prospects for the future through global understanding.

The Secretary-General's role in developing a rational basis for worldwide development activities has succeeded in focusing attention on the issues of our times through a series of conferences held over the past five years on the environment, human rights, population, social development, women and human settlements. These represent important reference points for global action based on international consensus in dealing with problems that were once marginal but are today substantial. We call on the Secretary-General to pursue this approach, which allows the United Nations to stand out in a distinctive and positive way in a world of growing negativity.

A strengthened role, reform and enhanced efficiency are our common objectives for the United Nations. The historic Declaration issued last year by the Heads of State and Government on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations constitutes a cornerstone for the future work of the Organization. The Declaration contained a clear conceptual framework for global action on the basis of the priorities upon which we all agreed: peace based on the principles and provisions of the Charter and supported by an effective regime of collective security; development in all its aspects in the social and economic fields; sovereign equality among States and respect for peoples' rights; and justice in addressing the various issues on the international agenda. Egypt deems it necessary to translate these noble principles into clear programmes of action that take into consideration the interests of all without discrimination.

When we met here last year to celebrate the United Nations fiftieth anniversary, we were dismayed by the events in the Great Lakes region in Africa, where horrendous massacres had left a painful humanitarian legacy. We were disturbed by the events in Bosnia, where United Nations "safe areas" had been overrun and innocent people had lost their lives in despicable ethnic strife. However, we were optimistic at that time about developments in the Middle East. The Interim Agreement had been signed between President Yasser Arafat and the late Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, and described as an important step on the path to finding a solution to the question of Palestine. Has the situation changed or evolved for the better?

Let us look into last year's developments in that region. In recent months, the Middle East has undergone a crisis that has almost stifled the peace process, a crisis resulting from the reluctance of the Israeli Government to act in keeping with the agreed fundamentals of peace. This position has threatened a return to the language, concepts, policies and even practices that were on the eve of extinction in the region. Thus, action on all peace tracks was deadlocked and the peace process stagnated. This prompted Egypt, which initiated that process and believes in a just and balanced Arab-Israeli peace, to intensify efforts to rectify the situation and consolidate the fundamentals of this process, first among which is the "land for peace" principle.

In this context, I would like to put forward the Arab position as contained in the final communiqué of the summit held in Cairo last June. The attending Arab leaders unanimously expressed their keen interest in the continuation of the process of making a just and comprehensive peace an Arab strategic option under international legality. This Arab position requires a corresponding commitment, seriously and unequivocally undertaken by Israel, to abide by the principles agreed upon at the Madrid Conference, particularly the "land for peace" principle and the assurances provided to the parties. The Arab leaders stressed that any breach by Israel of these principles or of the bases in which the peace process is anchored; any reneging on the commitments, undertakings or agreements made in the framework of this process; or any procrastination in their implementation would set back the peace process, with all the risks and repercussions involved. This could replunge the region into an atmosphere of tension and would force all Arab countries to reconsider the steps taken *vis-à-vis* Israel within the framework of the peace process. In such a case, the Israeli Government alone would assume full responsibility.

The Arab leaders emphasized that there would be no recognition or acceptance of any situation resulting from Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Arab territories, since the settlements are considered an illegal measure that entails no rights and establishes no obligations. The

establishment of settlements and the bringing in of settlers violate international law and the Madrid framework and impede the peace process, which requires Israel to halt all settlement activities in the occupied territories. The Arab leaders also emphasized that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East can be achieved only through a resolution of the questions of Al-Quds and the Palestinian refugees on the basis of their rights of return and to compensation, in accordance with international legality and United Nations resolutions.

A short while ago, the new Israeli Prime Minister met with the Palestinian President. Undoubtedly, their meeting represents progress towards their mutual recognition as partners on an equal footing in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. In theory, the peace process should proceed to implement the commitments made under the Oslo Accords in accordance with the agreed timetable, but that has not yet happened.

We are interested not in handshakes or wide smiles for photo opportunities, but rather in substantive developments. Thus, what is required and what we should all strive for is the implementation of commitments, serious negotiation and time well spent. We call upon the entire world to follow up the matter with us with full vigilance and to allow neither retrogression nor the manipulation of very sensitive and serious matters, namely, the establishment of a permanent contractual peace between Palestine and Israel that fulfils the national aspirations of the Palestinian people and culminates in their exercise of their right to self-determination under international supervision and the establishment of a Palestinian State. This peace must also achieve security for Israel and all parties on an equal footing.

Israel is called upon to desist from its settlement policy, including the expansion of settlements, and to end its policies of closing territories and besieging the Palestinian people. It is called upon to honour its commitments, redeploy its troops outside Hebron and resume without further delay the final status negotiations. Israel is also called upon to put an end to its practices in Al-Quds, a city where any rights that could be claimed by Israel are outweighed by Arab rights, which are more ancient, legitimate and authentic than any Israeli claim to the city.

On the Syrian track, I can say in all honesty and with full confidence that Syria is ready to resume the negotiations suspended last February at Israel's request. The negotiations should resume at the point at which they stopped, which is fair, and in accordance with the Madrid framework and the principle of "land for peace", which is right.

From this rostrum, Egypt calls for the resumption of these negotiations. Israel must refrain from pursuing policies and formulations that may be interpreted as squandering years of negotiations and that constitute a regression from principles that have become an integral part of the rules for peaceful work in the region and are backed by international legality and supported by broad international consensus.

On the Lebanese track, we call for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and Israel's full withdrawal from Lebanon, to which Israeli officials have repeatedly stated they have no territorial claim.

Peace in the Middle East will not be comprehensive or lasting until a strict regime for regional security is established, based on arrangements that provide equal security for all parties with minimum levels of armament.

The region must be totally free from all weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological — and their delivery systems. Peace and security cannot survive in the presence of any instability in the balance of power or serious discrepancy in the rights and obligations of the countries of the region.

Furthermore, we are closely watching the huge Israeli arsenal, which includes weapons of mass destruction, missiles and anti-missile weapons. We wonder about the rationale behind it. We believe that it has, indeed, led to a reaction by a number of countries in the region to this serious escalation, at a time when we are all talking of peace. Given this fact — or, rather, to avoid its consequences — Egypt proposes the initiation of effective negotiations to establish a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. President Hosni Mubarak has been making such a proposal since April 1990.

Egypt calls upon the permanent members of the Security Council and the depositary States of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which sponsored and adopted the resolution on the Middle East during the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to take specific steps to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in

accordance with the Egyptian initiative, which has enjoyed the consensus of all the States concerned since 1980.

While Egypt stresses the fact that arms control and regional security constitute one of the pillars of peace and stability in the Middle East, it also believes that economic and regional cooperation under a just peace constitutes another such pillar. Regional cooperation is inseparable from the establishment of peace: peace is its essence and its framework. Two sessions of the Middle East-North Africa Economic Summit have been held, in Casablanca and in Amman, the capital of Jordan. Both were held in an atmosphere of optimism that the peace process would succeed. Indeed, there have been some successes, such as the signing of the interim agreement between Israel and Palestine, and the holding of direct negotiations between Syria and Israel. They took place against the background of a receding settlement policy and continuous discussion about peace and its objectives. However, today we see the exact opposite. This state of affairs threatens peace, its framework and all that is associated with it, including regional cooperation, which can prosper only in an atmosphere of peace and hope for the future. We therefore call upon Israel to return to the fundamental framework of peace in accordance with the agreements concluded, the terms of reference established and the principles approved.

While Egypt is in favour of holding the third Economic Summit as scheduled — like others, we have a great deal to contribute in the fields of economic reform, investment and development — we call upon the sponsors of the peace process, especially the United States, to strive to create the conditions that could lead to the successful convening of the Summit. That can be achieved only by making serious endeavours on all peace tracks, in terms of both negotiation and implementation. We are making this declaration before the entire international community, so that every party will discharge its responsibilities and honour its commitments. If they do not, the balance will be disturbed and the issue will become meaningless.

Peace in the Middle East is contingent upon justice, balance and honesty in negotiating and addressing the needs of peoples. From this stems the open Egyptian diplomacy that regards the current situation as a matter of utmost seriousness. We once again reiterate that Egypt rejects any measure that results in an unbalanced peace that satisfies the interests of one party at the expense of another. The peace that we aspire to is a balanced Arab-Israeli peace that reciprocates right for right, security for security, and commitment for commitment.

A just and comprehensive peace is the cornerstone of stability in the Middle East. Despite the unpropitious attitude of the new Israeli Government to the peace process, right alone will eventually prevail. Peace will impose itself, propelled by the desire of the peoples of the region, including the people of Israel, to live in genuine peace, cooperation and stability.

Egypt, whose people contributed to laying the foundations of human civilization, has for centuries accepted and continues to accept the imperatives of geography and history, which give Egypt special responsibilities for the affairs of our region and beyond. Egypt takes the initiative for peace, seeks prosperity, prompts enlightenment and is steadfastly involved in advancing the march of progress.

Egypt therefore empathizes with the agony of the region and the repercussions of developments there. While peace in the Middle East is at a crucial stage, the Gulf region, which is part of the Middle East, is also undergoing a number of unfavourable developments. The stability of the Gulf region is, for more than one reason, linked to the ultimate interests of Egypt and its security. In particular, it is an area endowed with a potential and with characteristics that make its stability and security a matter of significance to all Powers concerned with international peace and security.

The result of our review of the succession of events in this area leads us to several conclusions. First, strict compliance with Security Council resolutions on Iraq, without fail or divergences, is the only way to guarantee the end of the crisis that erupted in August 1990. Secondly, the use of force cannot restore rights or rectify wrongs. Thus, the rights of the Iraqi people, the maintenance of its unity and respect for the rights and well-being of Iraqis, whether Arabs or Kurds, will remain the major concern of all of us. We are equally concerned with safeguarding the rights of the people of Kuwait and the return of detainees and property.

Thirdly, the memorandum of understanding on the oil-for-food resolution, which was reached after arduous negotiations, must be put into effect without any further delay to alleviate the suffering of our brothers, the Iraqi people.

Fourthly, compromising territorial integrity and the unity of Iraq is not only a breach of international law but will open the door to major repercussions undermining

regional stability and threatening the interests of neighbouring countries.

Fifthly, the withdrawal of Iran from the three islands of the United Arab Emirates — Abu Musa, Tunb as Sughra and Tunb al Kubra — is a *sine qua non* condition for defusing another hotbed of tension. The Arab call to Iran to settle amicably any territorial claims to those islands is still valid.

Sixthly, the policy of intervention and the attempts to manipulate ethnic and religious minorities to destabilize other neighbouring countries cannot help to establish stability in the Gulf region or the wider region of the Middle East, or help ensure the interests of any of the parties concerned, in addition to its being a flagrant violation of the rules of international conduct.

Before leaving the issue of the Middle East, I would like to refer to the dispute between Libya and some Western countries, a dispute to which we attach particular importance because of its repercussions for the region as well as the damage and suffering it inflicts on our brothers, the people of Libya, on the economies of the neighbouring countries and on the stability of the region in general. In view of our keen interest in averting an escalation of the problem and in expediting the attainment of an early settlement, we support the efforts and initiatives made by the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Non-Aligned Movement, and call for a positive response to those efforts and initiatives.

Moving from the Middle East to Africa, we find stories of success and of failure — pictures both bleak and bright. While our sister country Rwanda has restored its stability and launched its reconstruction and development, its neighbour, our sister Burundi, is an example of the real turmoil which is affecting the entire Great Lakes region. Last year we expressed our extreme dismay at the situation in this important region; today we reiterate this, and stress the need for the Security Council to discharge its responsibilities to avert the recurrence of Rwanda's tragedy in Burundi.

There is, however, a positive element that we hope will not be lost in the disappointment over the deteriorating situation in Africa: the efforts of the OAU, which have started to take shape within an institutional framework that we hope will be successful. This was embodied in the establishment of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which will play a role in resolving the problems of the continent. The countries and the leaders of the Great Lakes region, particularly former President Nyerere, have played a laudable collective role in reconciliation, dealing with the question of refugees and the rampant ethnic rivalries in the region. Serious efforts were also made by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to settle the Liberian problem, particularly by Nigeria, which has made continuing efforts during its current chairmanship of that subregional group. We commend the efforts made by Ghana during its chairmanship of ECOWAS over the past two years. We call on the international community, and the United Nations in particular, to support all of these efforts and to provide the necessary means for their success.

This applies also to the numerous efforts made to achieve national reconciliation in Somalia, the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol in Angola and the settlement plan in Western Sahara. We hope that the parties concerned will benefit from these historic opportunities, so that stability will prevail in Africa and so that international support for these efforts will continue, particularly in terms of post-conflict rehabilitation and socio-economic reconstruction.

In this context, I should like to draw attention to the gravity of the continued deterioration of the socio-economic situation in the African continent, which includes two-thirds of the world's least-developed countries; one-third of its population is facing starvation. Despite this fact, the countries of the continent are tenaciously striving towards economic reform, structural adjustment, strengthening regional cooperation among themselves and dealing with the social situation in the continent in accordance with the Declaration issued in Cairo in March 1995.

These efforts are still faltering as a result of diminishing international support and a lack of necessary financial resources. Thus we support the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative for Africa presented last March by the Secretary-General based upon comprehensive mobilization of resources and full participation of international institutions. Hence, we call upon donor countries and upon the international community to take the necessary measures to deal with the critical economic situation in Africa, particularly the external debt problem, by providing the necessary resources and creating an environment that will enable the continent to join the march of development and to be able to address its socio-economic problems, which

represent one of the root causes of political tension and instability there.

The critical economic situation in Africa leads us to voice some of the concerns of Egypt and the developing countries *vis-à-vis* the world's economy. Suffice it here to make a reference to the importance of the faithful implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements and the necessity to address the negative impact on the net food importing countries. We look forward to the success of the first ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), to be held in Singapore. We would like to highlight the importance of focusing on the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements without attempting to raise new issues such as those pertaining to investment and the linkage between international trade, on the one hand, and labour and environment, on the other. Any proposed additional issues should be subject to in-depth study. We reiterate the leading and important role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in this regard prior to bringing such issues to the WTO for consideration.

Turning to Bosnia, there is hope of implementing the Dayton agreement to put an end to the appalling tragedy caused by "ethnic cleansing" and racist narrow-mindedness. The agreement will be implemented under international protection, represented by the Implementation Force (IFOR), to which Egypt and numerous other countries contribute. Despite all the circumstances associated with the election process, its results are still a source of optimism in the possible victory of the forces of moderation so that Bosnia can become a multi-ethnic State where Serbs, Muslims and Croats live together in peace.

Egypt welcomes the election of President Izetbejovic as President of the tripartite Presidential Council. In this respect we would like to stress a number of points which we think can guarantee the stability of the situation and ensure full compliance with the provisions of the Dayton agreement. First, it is important to consolidate the territorial integrity of Bosnia, to reject vehemently and strictly any attempts at partition and to respect the democratic process and the results of elections. Secondly, it is necessary to assist the State of Bosnia in completing the necessary components of building its national army and to provide it with the equipment it needs to deter any external threat or face a new collapse of the internal situation after IFOR withdraws. Thirdly, it is necessary to provide the economic support Bosnia needs to rebuild and rehabilitate the country, since this will represent support for the foundations of coexistence and peace among its three ethnic groups. Fourthly, it is essential to punish the war criminals. Otherwise, talking about human rights in the world will be futile and will be considered as an entrenchment of double standards.

The phenomenon of terrorism has become exacerbated and now knows no boundaries. We must all implement the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, which was adopted at the forty-ninth session. Terrorists must find no refuge in any civilized country. We must all cooperate in uprooting all sources of terrorism. We must construct a well-defined legal system that ensures the pursuit of those who are responsible for terrorism, and their prosecution and extradition to stand trial for the crimes they have perpetrated, crimes that terrorize peaceful people and threaten international stability. We must define clear criteria and rules that guarantee that the right of political asylum will not be extended to the undeserving, so that that right will not become a licence encouraging terrorists and protecting them from prosecution and punishment.

Terrorism is an international phenomenon that is not linked to a particular geographic region or to a particular civilization, culture or religion. We have witnessed the evidence, ranging from the Far East to the Middle East, to Europe, and to America. Terrorism has even come close to this very building. The entire international community must harness the necessary resources to confront this vicious aggressive phenomenon, to eradicate its sources and to isolate whoever provides it with assistance and encouragement. In this respect, I call on the United Nations and the civilized peoples of the world to respond swiftly to the call of President Hosni Mubarak to hold an international conference to deal with the criminal phenomenon of terrorism and, as a contribution to peace and stability in the world at large — to mobilize joint international efforts to combat it.

I began my statement with our perception of the role of this Organization. I conclude it by paying tribute and expressing my appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose expertise and insight have contributed, during his current tenure, to the identification of problems and challenges facing the international community and this Organization. He has drawn up the agenda on items under consideration as well as approaches for dealing with them. The implementation of this agenda is contingent upon the will and the interest of the Member States.

As it reiterates its confidence in the Secretary-General, a confidence shared by members of two of the most prominent regional organizations — the Arab League and the Organization of African Unity — Egypt attaches high priority to seeing him preside over the United Nations Secretariat for a second term, during which he will have the chance to lead the Secretariat and to take part in implementing the programmes he devised, the reform process he designed and the solutions he initiated to the problems facing the Organization, problems that surface in an international arena witnessing the birth of a new order whose features are not yet defined, problems that occur as the United Nations passes through a historic juncture, on the threshold of a new century and a new millennium.

The Acting President: I call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, Mr. Fernando Naranjo Villalobos.

Mr. Naranjo Villalobos (Costa Rica) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The delegation of Costa Rica is pleased to extend its warmest congratulations to the President of the General Assembly on his election. In addition to his distinguished personal and professional qualities, we are inspired by the respect and friendship that we share with Malaysia, a living example of many peoples joining their efforts without losing their identity, as is appropriately stated in the motto of Malaysia: Unity is strength.

I am also pleased to convey Costa Rica's respects to the former President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his excellent work presiding over the deliberations of the Assembly.

Mr. Secretary-General, your work in favour of world peace and security and your efforts to renew the United Nations have granted you a place of honour in the pages of the history of this Organization and of the international community. My delegation wishes to convey the gratitude and respect Costa Rica feels for your commendable work.

A session of the General Assembly is necessarily a time for meditation for all Member States. Each and every delegation asks itself the same questions: what progress has been made towards fulfilling the purposes and principles of the United Nations during the last 12 months? What has our country or region done to contribute to that task? Is the United Nations playing the role we would like it to? What can we do to ensure that this Organization lives up to the hopes placed in it? What progress have we achieved in the reform of the United Nations?

We are keenly aware that in this post-cold-war era the United Nations agenda has grown considerably. Nevertheless, the present situation does not seem very encouraging. The establishment of this Organization, as we were reminded during the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary, was one of the most extraordinary consequences of the end of the Second World War. However, the so-called balance of terror between the super-Powers that prevailed in the cold-war years has been followed by a long series of conflicts that, despite their limited geographical scope, are nonetheless damaging and bloody. We have watched in anguish as, in several parts of the world, national, religious, tribal and racial hatreds have re-emerged. Even within pluralistic democracies, situations of extreme poverty and social injustice in some instances, or of crime and drug trafficking in others, have unleashed varying degrees of violence. To all this we must add the recent events of recent weeks in the Middle East, which have given rise to deep concern and may have grave consequences for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Nonetheless, there are grounds for optimism. We hope that the elections in Bosnia, which took place in a harmonious environment, will allow for the establishment of a durable multi-ethnic State, in the spirit of the peace agreements.

In the same vein, my delegation welcomes the resumption of negotiations between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority aimed at achieving harmonious relations among the peoples inhabiting the Holy Land. I am pleased to inform the General Assembly that a plenipotentiary envoy from Costa Rica met recently with Chairman Arafat to convey to him Costa Rica's solidarity with the Palestinian people and its steadfast determination to support and contribute to compliance with the Oslo agreements in order to achieve a stable and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Costa Rica, which will soon celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the abolition of its armed forces, also welcomed the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the legality of the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and it is deeply satisfied by the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Since 1958, in the framework of the Organization of American States, my country has been proposing the limitation of conventional weapons and the prohibition of nuclear weapons within the inter-American system. In keeping with this civil and pacifist inclination, Costa Rica signed

the Treaty at the General Assembly. My delegation further calls fraternally upon all Member States of the United Nations to do likewise as soon as possible. Similarly, my nation considers most favourably the draft resolution proposed by Malaysia regarding the follow-up to the Advisory Opinion and its call for the start of negotiations to conclude a treaty providing for global nuclear disarmament.

We are also of the view that greater consideration needs to be given to the problems raised by international arms transfers and trade. The delegation of Costa Rica would like to take this opportunity to recall the draft international code of conduct on this issue, proposed by the former President of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias, and other Nobel Prize laureates, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations and with the aspiration of maintaining world peace.

Costa Rica is also pleased to say that Central America has continued its progress in consolidating peace and democracy. Although we still suffer serious problems and still face harsh social and economic realities, the bloody crisis of the 1980s belongs to the past. The Central American countries are firmly committed to consolidating peace and maintaining democracy. Honest and pluralistic electoral processes have become the norm where before they were the exception. National reconciliation is becoming a reality. The recent, definitive progress in the Guatemalan peace process augurs well for the definitive attainment of peace in the entire Central American area. In this regard, I am pleased to extend special congratulations to the Government of President Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen, to the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), to the Group of Friends, particularly the Government of Mexico and President Ernesto Zedillo, and to the Secretariat of the United Nations, for the progress recently achieved.

The existence of peace and democracy in Central America, a region usually considered turbulent, proves that will and perseverance can overcome any of the negative legacies of history. We, the Central American peoples, hope that other peoples will join in this experience, without having to pay so high a price. Nonetheless, precisely because all the countries in the region were affected, in one way or another, by this political and security crisis, all of us are now working determinedly to ensure that that chapter will not be reopened.

We know, furthermore, that without development there will be no lasting peace. With this conviction, the Central American region has found a common goal in the endeavour to attain sustainable political, economic, social cultural and environmental development.

Two years ago, the Central American nations decided to unite in an Alliance for Sustainable Development. In addition to reconciling humankind with nature, this Alliance aspires to establish in our countries a society that will allow present generations to fully develop their capabilities in all areas and that will ensure future generations a prosperous future.

Our Alliance is based on a common political project that combines economic growth, environmental balance and individual freedom. For the first time in its long history, Central America has a common developmental goal, and this in turn strengthens its dedication to regionalism.

In the same line of action, Central America has set out on a quest for innovative approaches to the rest of the world that will help it realize its political, social, economic, cultural and environmental goals. This joint fraternal action aimed at reincorporating Central America into the international community has sought to institutionalize new links with other countries and regions that have supported our efforts to attain peace and democracy in the isthmus, and that are now cooperating in our struggle for sustainable development. Central America has thus established special mechanisms of dialogue and cooperation with Mexico, Chile, Canada, the United States of America, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Republic of China on Taiwan. We have also redefined our relations with the European Union, institutionalized since the start of the last decade in what is known as the San José dialogue. We hope that in the near future these activities will be extended to other countries and regions.

The conviction that it is possible to consolidate peace only through development is not exclusive to Central America. This year my country has had the honour and the privilege to preside over the Group of 77 and China in New York. This has allowed us to represent and defend on numerous occasions the points of view of the countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

One fifth of humanity continues to live in conditions of extreme poverty; discrimination on the basis of gender continues to be the order of the day; millions of children continue to lack access to education, health services and

nutrition. My delegation views these facts with deep regret and attaches the utmost importance to the Agenda for Development.

In this connection, I wish to reiterate the conviction expressed recently on the occasion of the adoption of the report of the Working Group on this matter — that that forum must remain open. A true United Nations system is inconceivable without an integrated and comprehensive plan of action for development. If the issues of development and international cooperation were to be reduced or diminished in this Organization, the very essence of the United Nations would be seriously affected.

In that same spirit of solidarity that holds sway in our Organization, we believe that the preservation and strengthening of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations International Development Organization (UNIDO) are essential. For small countries in particular, the linkage between commerce, technology transfer and development are, in and of themselves, outside the framework of the World Trade Organization. In order to emphasize this firm conviction, the President of Costa Rica travelled to South Africa on the occasion of UNCTAD's 9th meeting. At that forum he expressed our country's support for the just and legitimate aspirations to development of the countries of the third world.

International cooperation cannot be viewed solely in terms of the richest giving aid to the poorest. We strongly believe in the necessity and appropriateness of intensifying the efforts aimed at increasing horizontal cooperation between developing countries. In January 1997, at the conclusion of its term as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, Costa Rica will convene — with the participation of the private sector and non-governmental organizations — a South-South conference on trade, finance and investment. We hope that new and constructive approaches to speed up the rate of economic and financial cooperation among developing countries will result from that conference.

Directly related to the subject of the Agenda for Development is the need for an integrated follow-up to the agreements and programmes of action adopted at the summits and conferences held by the United Nations in the last decade. In them lies the real agenda of work for the United Nations in such essential fields as the environment, population, human rights, the rights of women and children, habitat and social development. Accordingly, Costa Rica, in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, promoted and received unanimous support in the Economic and Social Council for a resolution designed to give coherence and provide follow-up to the agreements and programmes of action of the international conferences and summits of the United Nations.

Costa Rica, as an agricultural country, attaches great importance to the food summit planned to be held at Rome at the end of this year. As early as 1954, through the initiative of then-President José Figueres Ferrer, Costa Rica proposed to this Organization the creation of a world food reserve that would enable us to confront the effects of natural disasters and famines. Today we still believe that international solidarity is decisive in facing food challenges and that it constitutes a fundamental goal of contemporary international relations that should not be disregarded in the search for economic liberalization.

Of greatest importance, and closely related to these issues, is the need to pay attention to the problems of desertification and water resources, which during the early years of the next millennium will gravely affect food production and the very existence of the human species.

At the World Summit for Social Development, it was reaffirmed that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. Among those rights is the global right to development, which, in Costa Rica's opinion, right cannot be reduced to its mere economic dimension. Development must also have a moral and ethical dimension. We must accept the responsibility of ensuring that the world that we are going to leave to future generations is going to be more peaceful, healthier, more humane and more democratic than the one in which we have lived. This responsibility must be shared individually and collectively, nationally and internationally by all elements of society.

Reflection on what we have done and what we have failed to do over the last 12 months leads us to the question of what must be done in the immediate future. In this connection, the revitalization and reform of the United Nations system is pivotal. In its analysis of this issue, the Government of Costa Rica has considered with deep interest some of the proposals contained in the report of the Commission on Global Governance. The reform of the United Nations must reflect the realities of change, including the capacity of civil society to contribute to global governance.

My delegation attaches fundamental importance to the restructuring of the Security Council. We cannot

arrive at the year 2000 still using the calendar of 1945. The Council cannot continue to be held in a framework that has been fully overtaken by the reality of international politics. Costa Rica considers it a priority to take up this task, both in order to grant permanent membership to Germany and Japan and to a representative of each of the three developing regions — Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, we must reorganize the powers of the Council and of its members. If the political conditions for a reform of this kind do not exist, we must then consider other possibilities, such as the proposal made by the Government of Italy.

We consider that there is a need to infuse the General Assembly with new vitality, as regards both the need to ensure the principle of universality and the modernization of its agenda and procedures. We believe that no people on Earth should be denied the right to be represented in our Organization.

My delegation is also of the view that greater importance should be given to the work of the Council and the Secretariat in the area of preventive diplomacy. The actions of these bodies at the outset of a conflict can be decisive in achieving a solution, but they would be even more so if their powers were increased so that they could anticipate such situations. Similarly, we believe that there is a need to restructure the Secretariat to give it greater flexibility and effectiveness in the execution of its tasks.

As a country that entrusts its security to international law, Costa Rica gives a place of honour to the International Court of Justice. In our opinion, the acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court could become a duty inherent in membership of this Organization.

Finally, the restructuring of the United Nations is also directly linked to its financial capabilities. The new United Nations cannot be the property of the major Powers, nor can it become the sole responsibility of a small group of States. The United Nations of the future should belong to all, and this conception logically involves the duty of all its Members to meet their commitments in accordance with the scale of assessments. In this respect, my delegation believes that the full reform of the United Nations system, if it ensures a more rational administration and more equitable distribution of the resources and programmes of the Organization, will put the Organization in a better position to insist that its Members States pay their assessments on time.

Our world is approaching the third millennium. In the midst of so much darkness, so many challenges and so many overwhelming difficulties, the human race retains a spirit that, together with the use of language, distinguishes it from any other species: hope. This spirit, now more than ever before, is embodied in this Organization. The United Nations must remain united in its effort to make the present better and united in its goal to design a promising future.

I should like to conclude by recalling a teaching of the Prophet Mohammed which continues to resonate today as a norm of conduct for all human beings and all nations on Earth:

> "Do not break the ties of friendship, do not feel bitterness towards your fellow men, do not feel loathing for them, do not envy them. Live as brothers, as God has ordered us to do."

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, His Excellency Mr. Mihai Popov.

Mr. Popov (Republic of Moldova) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate Mr. Razali most warmly on his election as President of this session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I am convinced that his diplomatic qualities will contribute greatly to the attainment of the objectives of this session. It is my pleasure to express my gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Diego Freitas do Amaral for the excellent conduct and competence that he displayed during his presidency of the previous session.

During the five years that have elapsed since the declaration of our independence, and in the four years since the Republic of Moldova was admitted to the United Nations, we have tried to show the whole world that we are a country that is seeking a worthy place in the international community. My country's choice of the rule of law and a market economy has led to an increase in its credibility at the international level. I should like to assure the Assembly that the Republic of Moldova is irreversibly committed to the path of democracy, which is the best guarantee of sustainable development, peace and social progress. I should like to stress that the process of democratic reforms in our country has been, and continues to be, supported by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, by the European organizations and by the entire international community. I take this

opportunity to extend thanks for this assistance, which is essential for our programme of reforms.

The complex process of transition in the Republic of Moldova and in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is facing difficulties that require additional means. This reform has also created negative social phenomena, which have particularly affected the most vulnerable groups of the population. To alleviate these undesirable effects, the Government has adopted and implemented measures of social protection. The difficulties that we are facing in promoting economic reforms are created not only by a lack of experience but also by a shortage of commodities and financial and energy resources. In this respect, I should like to stress the importance of support and encouragement offered to the Republic of Moldova by the international financial institutions, by the United Nations specialized agencies and by certain developed countries. We will also need such support in the future to smoothly carry out our reforms.

Integration into European economic and political structures remains a priority of our foreign policy. We are convinced that, given the objectives of economic and social reform, the development and deepening of relations with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and the European Union, as well as close cooperation in the context of the Partnership for Peace programme and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, take on a new dimension. Such a process also creates favourable conditions for the affirmation of the Republic of Moldova as a sovereign and independent State. We state our willingness to cooperate with regional organizations to ensure stability in Europe as well as peace and security throughout the world. The choice of permanent neutrality stipulated in our Constitution explains why the Republic of Moldova is not participating in, and does not intend to join, the military structures of the Commonwealth of Independent States or of other regional organizations.

The conflict in the eastern part of my country remains an obstacle to democratization and to progress on economic reforms. We cannot ignore the continuing violations of human rights in the Transdnestr. The international community has been informed of them many times. Despite our negotiations and many appeals of international organizations, we have yet to obtain the release of the members of the Ilascu group, who were sentenced and imprisoned illegally four years ago by the anti-constitutional authorities of Tiraspol.We are concerned that the Moldavian population in the schools and institutions of this region of the country are banned from using Latin characters in the study of their mother tongue.

This conflict still remains a central concern, despite negotiations, despite the spirit of compromise of the political leaders, and despite their will to resolve the problems in the eastern zone through peaceful means, in cooperation with international organizations such as the United Nations and the OSCE, and together with the assistance of the affected States, Russia and the Ukraine, which have expressed their willingness to be guarantors.

The Republic of Moldova believes that the only solution to the conflict lies in the development of a draft law related to the special status of Transdnestr as an integral part of a unified and indivisible State, in accordance with our Constitution. In the context of negotiations, we have already signed several interim documents covering various aspects of the normalization of the situation in this region. We remain true to the principle of territorial integrity and of the sovereignty of the State, which we will always respect. Unfortunately, the authorities of the anti-constitutional republic are not yet ready to accept the principle of territorial integrity and of the sovereignty of the State.

We reaffirm our willingness to continue negotiations with the authorities of Tiraspol in order to find a solution to the Transdnestr conflict.

We consider that the process of a peaceful and definitive solution to the conflict in the eastern zone of the Republic of Moldova could be considerably accelerated through the immediate, complete, ordered and unconditional withdrawal of military units of the Russian Federation.

We are concerned by the fact that these foreign troops continue to be stationed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, which is contrary to our constitutional stipulation of the neutrality of our country. Although the agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation relating to the legal status, the method and the terms of withdrawal of Russian military contingents stationed temporarily on the territory of Moldova was signed two years ago, the Russian State Duma has yet to ratify the agreement. We hope that the competent Russian authorities will accelerate the entry into force and the implementation of the Moldovan-Russian agreement of 21 October 1994.

As regards to the revitalization of the United Nations and the reform of its structures in the spirit of democratization and in accordance of the latest world developments, we note with satisfaction that the United Nations as a guarantor of international peace, stability and security has expanded its efforts through improving the mechanisms for maintaining peace and has intensified its activities in the area of preventive diplomacy and the settlement of regional conflicts, and has developed new concepts and means for crisis management such as stand-by commitments and rapid-reaction forces. The Republic of Moldova welcomes the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament towards the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

At present, goals likely to help overcome the financial crisis by finding the resources necessary for effective action by the United Nations are fundamental. In our view, the reform of the United Nations must also cover the financial aspect. We can attempt viable solutions only with the participation of all Member States.

The Republic of Moldova is not indifferent to this situation and will make efforts to meet its financial obligations. However, it is my duty to stress that we are obliged to bear an assessment that is calculated at a level which is exaggerated in comparison with our real possibilities. This calculation has led to a situation where the scale of assessments for our country is higher than that of States with a similar level of development. It is high time that we found an appropriate methodology reflecting the capacity to pay of States. We hope that the spirit of fairness and solidarity that reigns in the United Nations will lead the General Assembly to recommend that the Committee on Contributions revise and readjust the scale of assessment to the level of indices that would truly reflect the parameters of the economies of Member States. In this context, the Republic of Moldova supports the proposal of the European Union regarding the methodology regarding the calculation of the scale of assessments, which we consider to be fairer and more appropriate to the real payment capacity of all Member States than that which is used now.

The Republic of Moldova supports United Nations reforms aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the Organization and its main bodies, considering that this innovative process reflects reality and the changes which have occurred in the international system following the cold-war era.

At the same time, the Government of the Republic of Moldova attaches particular importance to the role the Security Council plays in preventing the development of new threats to peace and international security. Developing conflicts, acts of aggression and interference in the internal affairs of States threaten regional and international security. The role of the Security Council in avoiding these dangers is of prime importance. Aware of this role of the Security Council as a collective decision-making body in the area of peace and international security, the Republic of Moldova considers that a change in its composition must be carried out without hindering its effectiveness.

My delegation feels that an increase in the number of seats on the Security Council should be carried out in a balanced way including both permanent and non-permanent seats, which would provide access for new members from both the North and the South. As regards new permanent seats, the President of our Republic, His Excellency Mr. Mircea Snegur, proposed at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly that the status of permanent member be given to the major economic Powers which play an important role in economic affairs, such as Germany and Japan. As for the increase in the number of non-permanent seats, we find the Italian proposal interesting, as it reflects the interests of most States Members of the United Nations and offers a well-considered solution to this question.

The Republic of Moldova is devoted to the principles and to the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations, and greatly appreciates the activities of the United Nations, which for more than five decades has shown itself to be a forum for harmonizing the efforts of the peoples of the world in order to maintain international peace and security and to ensure the development of relations of friendship and cooperation among Member States. The actions undertaken by the United Nations have from the very beginning pursued the goal of building new relationships among countries of the whole world.

After four years of activity as a full Member, the actions of the Republic of Moldova within the context of the United Nations remain among the priorities of its foreign policy, aimed at giving our State a more active presence at the international level as well as at the development and intensification of relations of friendship and cooperation with all members of the international community. The Republic of Moldova is in favour of harmonizing the interests of Member States.

In conclusion, I would like to express the hope that the particular constructive spirit of the United Nations which reigns once again at this session of the General Assembly will enable us to respond to the challenges facing the international community at this time. I am convinced that the United Nations will remain a guarantee of international peace and security and of economic and social development worldwide. My delegation expresses its willingness to contribute to effective cooperation with the delegations of all Member States in order to attain the purposes of the United Nations.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

One representative has requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Chang Sik Se (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. Hashimoto, the Prime Minister of Japan, made remarks which aroused our immediate attention. His remarks were based on ignorance of the facts and were a clear demonstration of the character of a Japan without backbone, which blindly follows the clamours of others. I would like to ask him if Japan is in a position to make such remarks in this sacred international forum, which discusses universal political issues.

As for Mr. Hashimoto, he is one of the forces daily engaged in covering up Japan's past crimes, without any genuine apology or reparations, by visiting the Yasuguni Shrine to appease the souls of war criminals.

Successive Japanese authorities have pursued non-independent external policies subordinate to the United States and a one-sided policy in favour of South Korea. Japan is in a helpless position in which it cannot act other than at South Korean's instruction. Japan is not a party to the four-party talks mentioned by Mr. Hashimoto. I should like to ask him: If the four-party talks are to be held, does he know what issues would be discussed? If the issue of the withdrawal of United States troops from South Korea is to be addressed, is Japan ready to support the four-party talks?

On this occasion I should like again to make clear the position of the Democratic Republic of Korea that the attempt of Japan, which is without any independent political views whatsoever, to become a permanent member of the Security Council is a mockery of world politics. It would be better for Japan to apologize for the crimes it committed against the Korean and other Asian peoples and make reparations for its past than to mislead world public opinion.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.